

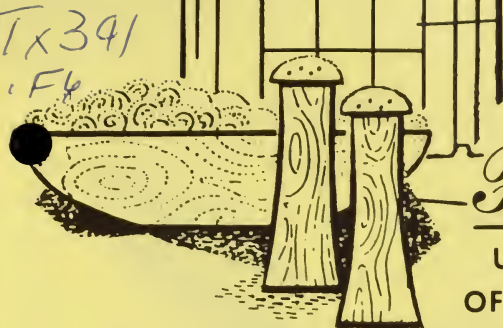
## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



a1x341

F4



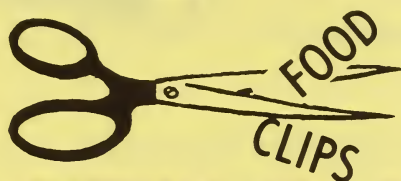
# Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

VOL. 32

August 18, 1975

NO. 33



## In This Issue:

- 1 - USDA Research Material
- 2 - The Wheat Crop
- 3 - World Food Prices
- 4 - (News Feature)

When selecting apples -- it's usually important to look for good color...which usually indicates full flavor according to U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing specialists.

\* \* \*

If you're not interested in using bananas immediately you should select slightly green-colored ones for use within a few days. In warm weather they tend to ripen very fast.

\* \* \*

Grapes should be plump, fresh in appearance and firmly attached to the stems. Most white or green varieties should have a slightly amber tone, according to USDA home economists.

\* \* \*

The color usually is a indicator for good melons (except watermelons). Ripe cantaloups should have a yellowish surface color; honeydews, a creamy color; crenshaws, a golden-yellow color mottled with green; casabas, a yellow color; and persian melons, a dull grey-green color.

\* \* \*

## A "SUPER SLURPER"

### — WHAT IS THAT?

It's not something for the kid-die-set. But --it's a new material dubbed "super slurper" because it can soak up liquids at a fast rate. One gram of powder can absorb and hold three hundred times its weight, according to Dr. William Doane, USDA scientist at the Agricultural Research Lab in Peoria, Illinois.

The so-called "super slurper" can also be produced as flakes, film, as a matte, or in liquid form. It was produced by grafting two compounds; one, a synthetic petrochemical, the other, ordinary corn starch.

One of its valuable uses happens to be the disposable diaper--it's ideal. Other potential uses for super slurper material is for surgical sponges, hospital pads and bandages. Actually, the list could be endless as this appears to be a versatile product that lends itself to experimentation for many home and farm uses.

Meanwhile--this product of corn starch research is still reaching out for new liquids to slurp!

## AND WHAT ABOUT ----- WHEAT

This year's wheat crop is going to be a record breaker, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture forecast.

Marketing specialists with the Agricultural Marketing Service expect total harvest to be near 2.2 billion bushels. This represents a 22 percent increase over last year's crop and 30 percent above the 1972-74 average.

According to Thomas Lutz of USDA's grain division, the large increase is due in part to "increased acreage and about a 4 bushel per acre increase in wheat yield".

Domestic use is expected to take only about 1/3 of this total. The rest will be exported or stored for emergencies at home and abroad.

The largest domestic use is for flour. Different kinds of wheat flours are selected for those qualities specific to the food product. For example: hard wheat flour from hard red winter and hard red spring wheat is usually higher in protein than other wheat flours. Hard wheat flour is more suitable for commercial bread production because it has the qualities to produce a lighter, more porous texture. This is the same reason that hard wheat flour is added to whole wheat and rye flours for bread.

Soft wheat flours, from soft red winter wheat and white winter wheat are sold for family use for biscuit or cake flours. In commercial production it is used for crackers, cakes, cookies and pastries.

All purpose flours are sold for home use as well and are used for yeast breads, quick breads, cakes, cookies, and pastries. Durum wheat is used exclusively for flour suitable for all pasta products.

Homemakers are seldom aware of the hardness or softness of flour. These are the characteristics of the two types: hard wheat falls into separate particles if shaken in the hand while soft wheat flour clumps a bit and tends to hold its shape if pressed together. Hard wheat flour feels somewhat coarse and granular when rubbed between the fingers. Soft wheat flour feels smooth, more like talcum powder.



## WORLD FOOD PRICES

## ----AND WHERE WE ARE

In fifteen world capitals the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts a survey of food prices--on the first Wednesday of every other month. Eighteen food items are checked in representative retail food stores when they are visited in each city, and average prices are constructed for each item.

This price information is cabled to FAS in Washington, D.C. where the foreign prices and weights are converted to U.S. equivalents. Currency is converted on the basis of its actual value on the date of the survey, and this affects the comparisons over a period of time.

The selection of food items are occasionally changed, depending on U.S. market conditions and world consumption patterns.

SURVEY OF RETAIL FOOD PRICES IN SELECTED WORLD CAPITALS JULY 2, 1975  
[In U.S. dollars per lb, converted at current exchange rates]

City	Steak, sirloin, boneless	Roast, chuck, boneless	Pork chops	Ham, canned	Bacon, sliced, pkd.	Broilers, whole	Eggs dozen	Butter	Cheese: Edam, Gouda, or Cheddar			Milk, whole, quart	Oil, cooking, quart	Tomatoes	Onions, yellow	Apples	Oranges dozen	Bread, white, pkd.	Rice	Sugar
Bonn	4.37	2.78	2.27	( <sup>1</sup> )	3.21	0.77	0.90	1.60	1.80	0.43	2.37	0.53	0.38	0.56	2.87	0.64	0.74	0.34		
Brasilia	.77	.47	1.29	1.96	2.60	.55	.64	1.42	1.40	.24	1.32	.12	.30	.44	( <sup>1</sup> )	.46	.26	.13		
Brussels	4.05	2.03	1.94	2.51	1.44	1.05	.73	1.64	1.93	.42	1.30	.57	.25	.87	.87	.27	.46	.28		
Buenos Aires	.62	.51	.49	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	.25	.35	1.00	1.57	.19	.33	.22	.10	.17	.49	.23	.16	.26		
Canberra	1.47	.86	1.49	2.75	2.28	1.08	1.14	.96	1.31	.53	1.63	.65	.24	.28	1.27	.39	.30	.17		
Copenhagen	4.73	2.20	2.61	3.13	2.63	1.03	1.17	1.57	1.63	.39	2.20	.98	.55	.49	2.16	.54	.51	.27		
London	3.13	1.43	1.76	1.41	2.12	.68	.84	.66	.92	.21	1.59	.48	.26	.51	1.72	.21	.42	.32		
Mexico City	1.27	1.16	1.38	2.94	1.70	.76	.91	1.85	3.03	.30	1.40	.18	.22	.25	.46	.28	.38	.08		
Ottawa	3.21	1.14	2.13	2.00	1.56	.88	.75	1.04	1.51	.55	1.58	.67	.34	.57	.95	.31	.51	.24		
Paris	3.24	1.66	1.92	3.13	1.88	1.08	.94	1.62	1.76	.36	1.73	.46	.39	1.07	1.89	.78	.36	.26		
Rome	3.36	2.06	1.88	2.61	1.53	1.08	1.13	1.82	1.52	.38	1.16	.14	.21	.35	.79	.41	.29	.32		
Stockholm	4.31	2.07	2.53	3.28	2.79	1.13	1.39	1.49	1.83	.32	4.63	1.24	.63	.37	2.15	.77	.53	.35		
The Hague	3.65	2.50	2.17	2.18	3.39	.71	.77	1.39	1.72	.34	.99	.44	.23	.31	1.00	.26	.43	.28		
Tokyo	15.00	4.20	2.70	4.04	3.30	.85	.85	1.93	1.77	.64	1.60	.29	.21	.67	1.71	.41	.33	.47		
Washington	2.12	1.52	2.29	1.81	1.72	.66	.72	.91	1.91	.44	1.72	.92	.37	.59	1.54	.48	.44	.24		
Median	3.24	1.66	1.94	2.61	2.20	.88	.85	1.49	1.72	.38	1.59	.48	.26	.49	1.40	.41	.42	.27		

<sup>1</sup> Not available. <sup>2</sup> White onions.

WORLD FOOD PRICES (CON'T)

World travelers--for business or pleasure--are finding that there are generally higher prices for food in fifteen major capitals--according to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service survey.

On a one month basis, the United States and Japan experienced the smallest percentage increase among the 15 food price indexes. On a yearly basis, Argentina's prices reflect the highest inflationary trend. There is a wide range for the raw value of a simple meal consisting of a 4 ounce sirloin steak, tomato, bread and butter--on July 2nd it cost \$4.37 in Tokyo, \$1.11 in Washington, and only 40 cents in Brasilia.

WHEAT SALES, BREAD PRICES IN U.S.

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz commenting on wheat prices last week said that "It is unrealistic for anyone to say that the mild recovery of wheat prices prompted by the Russian wheat sale will cause the price of bread to go up in any appreciable amount".

"The average price of wheat in Kansas City plunged \$1.70 per bushel from last October to this June," he said "yet this did not reduce the price of bread. Now that average wheat prices in July have recovered about 35 cents of that \$1.70 drop, it doesn't make sense to scream that this is going to increase bread prices..." stated Secretary Butz.

"Farmers are going to raise about 1.4 billion bushels more wheat in this country this year than U.S. consumers can use--so we have to export it. The Russian sale was less than 10 percent of what we have available to export, actually much less than we sold to India last year "he said.

- - - - -

---

NOTE: Shirley Wagener, Editor Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20050. Telephone 202-447-5898

---